Islamic Academy of Coventry

Sīrah of Muḥammad صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ

Part 6 - The Middle Years of the Makkan Period

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Sīrah of Muḥammad ﷺ
Part 6 - The Middle Years of the Makkan Period
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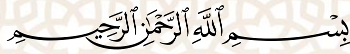
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Introduction

I begin in the name of Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ Lord of the Worlds, and sending Peace & Salutations on our beloved Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ.

The early Muslims faced many trials and tribulations from many of the Quraysh. Many of the leaders, like Abū Jahal, Abū Lahab, Umayyah and Ubay ibn Khalaf were open enemies of Islām.

Those Companions who had no supporters or helpers faced great difficulties. The likes of Bilāl, ʿAmmār, Yāsir, Sumayyah and Khabbāb رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنْهُمْ were persecuted and suffered greatly at the hands of the Quraysh. Some of the Companions paid the ultimate price for remaining steadfast in their faith.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ continued to be questioned by the Quraysh. They would even go so far as Madīnah to get help in looking for questions to pose to him. Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ would send down the Revelation, time and time again to clearly answer their queries.

The Quraysh then asked Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ to show them miracles like the splitting of the moon. By Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ command, the moon split into two, but still they refused to believe.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ gave permission to some of the early Muslims to migrate to Abyssinia. Najjāshi the emperor of Abyssinia was a just ruler and he would allow them to live there and practise Islām freely.

The Quraysh tried everything in their power to convince Najjāshi to send the Muslims back. The Muslims were summoned to the court and Jaʿfar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ the cousin of Rasūlullāh ﷺ eloquently answered his questions.

Najjāshi told the Qurayshi Messengers that he would not send the Muslims back under any circumstances. The Muslims now stayed in Abyssinia and practised their religion without any threat of persecution.

ʿUmar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ

ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ was the son of Al-Khaṭṭāb ibn Nufayl from the tribe of Banū ʿAdīy.

There is a narration in Sunan Tirmidhī where Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ supplicated to Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ and said,

عَنِ ابْنِ عُمَرَ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم قَالَ " اللَّهُمَّ أَعِزَّ الإِسْلاَمَ بِأَحَبِّ هَذَيْنِ الرَّجُلَيْنِ إِلَيْكَ بِأَبِي جَهْلٍ أَوْ بِعُمَرَ بْنِ الْخَطَّابِ " . قَالَ وَكَانَ أَحَبَّهُمَا إِلَيْهِ عُمَرُ[1]

'O Allāh! Honour Islām through the most dear of these two men to you: Through Abū Jahal or through ʿUmar ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb." He said: "And the most dear of them to Him was ʿUmar."

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was told that Abū Jahal will not come into Islām, then he made a specific supplication for ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

اللهم ايدالاسلام بعمر بن الخطاب خاصة

'Oh Allāh, strengthen Islām with ʿUmar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb specifically'

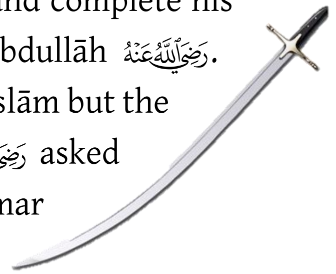
[1] Sunan Tirmidhī 4045

ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ Plan

ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ mentions that in the beginning I was severely against the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and despised the Religion of Islām.

Abū Jahal had made an announcement that he would give 100 camels to the person who kills the Prophet صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ asked Abu Jahal 'do you give a guarantee of this' Abū Jahal said yes.

ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ left with sword in hand to go and complete his task. On the way he met Nuʿaym ibn ʿAbdullāh رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ. Nuʿaym ibn ʿAbdullāh رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ had embraced Islām but the people did not know about it. Nuʿaym رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ asked him with what intention are you going, ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ said I intend to kill Muḥammad صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Nuʿaym رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ asked him, 'by killing the Prophet Muḥammad صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, how will you escape from the Banū Hāshim and the Banū Zuhrah?'.



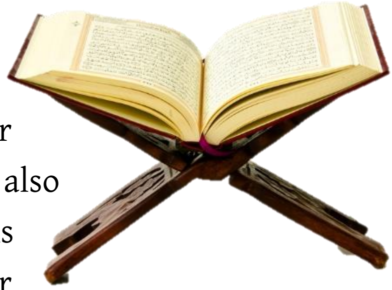
Upon hearing this question, ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ replied 'I think you have also lost your religion and left the religion of your forefathers'

Nuʿaym رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ then said, 'What are you saying to me, don't you know that your sister Fāṭimah and your brother in law Saʿīd ibn Zayd have both left your religion and accepted Islām?'.

ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ sister, Fāṭimah bint Al-Khaṭṭāb had embraced Islām and so had her husband, Saʿīd ibn Zayd رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ. They had both kept their Islām hidden from ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ Visit

As soon as ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ heard what Nuʿaym رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ had said, his anger increased, and he made his way to his sister's house.



At the time, Khabbāb ibn Al-Arat رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ was teaching ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ sister, Fāṭimah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا and her husband Saʿīd ibn Zayd رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ. He also had a Ṣaḥīfah (Qur'ān) with him. As soon as Khabbāb رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ heard ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ coming, he quickly hid. Fāṭimah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا took the Ṣaḥīfah and hid it under her thigh.

When ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ had come close to the house, he had heard Khabbāb رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ reciting the Qur'ān. ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ entered the house and asked, what had he heard. His sister and brother in law said that he hadn't heard anything.

ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ then told his sister and brother in law that he had been informed, that they were now following the religion of Muḥammad صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ brother in law, Saʿīd ibn Zayd رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ said to him 'Oh ʿUmar, if you know that your religion is not the truth, but another religion is on Ḥaqq (truth) then tell us what a person should do?'

ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ then fell upon his brother in law. His sister tried to stop him, but ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ hit her in such a way that her face became covered with blood. Only when he saw his sisters face did he stop hitting them.

At that point his sister Fāṭimah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا said, 'Oh son of Khaṭṭāb, do whatever you can, we have already become Muslim. Oh enemy of Allāh, are you only hitting us for the reason, that we believe Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ is one? Know this, that we have embraced Islām, even though your nose may be covered in dust'.

ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ Reads the Qur'ān

Upon hearing the words of his sister, ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ got embarrassed and regretted his actions. He asked them to show the book they had been reading. Khabbāb رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ who had been hiding in the house, heard the request and came out.

ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ sister Fāṭimah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا said to him, 'You are unclean, and only clean people can touch the Qur'ān, go and perform Wuḍū'.

ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ went and purified himself. He then took the Ṣaḥīfah in his hands in which Surah Ṭāhā was written and started to read it until he reached the following verse:

إِنَّنِيٓ أَنَا ٱللَّهُ لَآ إِلَـٰهَ إِلَّآ أَنَا۠
فَٱعْبُدْنِى وَأَقِمِ ٱلصَّلَوٰةَ لِذِكْرِىٓ ﴿١٤﴾[2]

"Surely, I am Allāh. There is no God but Myself, so worship Me, and establish Ṣalāh for My remembrance"

Upon reading these words, ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ started to praise them. Khabbāb رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ heard his words and said 'Oh ʿUmar, glad tidings are for you. I hope that the supplication Muḥammad صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ made for you has been accepted'.

ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ told Khabbāb رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ to take him to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ.

ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ embraces Islām

Khabbāb رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ took ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ and went to Dār Al-Arqam where Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and his companions used to gather. They reached the house and door was closed.

[2] Sūrah Ṭāhā verse 14



They knocked on the door and asked for permission to enter. When the Companions realised it was ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ, no one had the courage to open the door. Ḥamzah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ said 'Open the door and let him in, if Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ has intended good for him then Allāh will grant him Hidāyah (guidance), and he will enter the fold of Islām and follow the Messenger of Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ. Otherwise you will be safe from his evil with the will of Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ'.

The door was opened. ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ mentions that two people took him and made him stand in front of Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ told them to leave him.

ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ then says that he held my kurta, my tunic and pulled me towards him and said 'Oh Khaṭṭāb's son, accept Islām'. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ then made the Duʿā, 'Oh Allāh Guide him'.

ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ then said, 'Oh Messenger of Allāh, this is the reason I have come here, that I bring Imān (faith) on Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ and his Messenger and whatever has been revealed by Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ'. He then recited:

اَشْهَدُ اَنْ لاَ اِلٰهَ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ وَ اَنَّكَ رَسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ

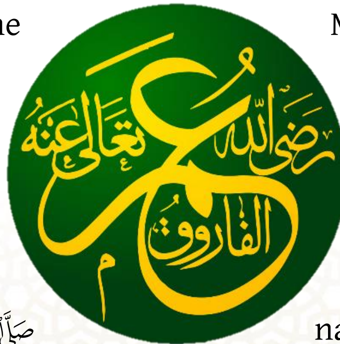
'I bear witness that there is no God except Allāh and Indeed you are the Messenger of Allāh'

On hearing this, Rasūlullāh ﷺ recited the Takbīr 'Allāhu Akbar' with happiness, and all the people in Dār Al-Arqam realized from this that ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ had now entered the fold of Islām.

عَنِ ابْنِ عَبَّاسٍ قَالَ لَمَّا أَسْلَمَ عُمَرُ نَزَلَ جِبْرِيلُ فَقَالَ يَا مُحَمَّدُ لَقَدِ اسْتَبْشَرَ أَهْلُ السَّمَاءِ بِإِسْلاَمِ عُمَرَ [3]

Ibn ʿAbbās رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ narrated that when ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ accepted Islām, Jibrīl Amīn came down and said 'Oh Muḥammad, all the creation in the Heavens are rejoicing because of ʿUmar's Islam'.

With ʿUmar رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ embracing, the respect and honour of Islām increased and the true religion went from strength to strength. The Muslims started to read Ṣalāt in the Ḥaram. The call towards Islām was now made openly. From that day the difference between truth and falsehood became visible and Rasūlullāh ﷺ named him Fārūq, the one who could distinguish between truth and falsehood



[3] Sunan Ibn Mājah 108

The Boycott

The Quraysh had tried many ways to make the Muslims leave their religion. All their efforts had been in vain, so now they had to try a new approach.

The number of Muslims was increasing, and they had been further strengthened by the Islām of ʿUmar and Ḥamzah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُمَا. The Quraysh decided that they would now introduce a boycott. The terms of this boycott were written down. The terms were:

All ties will be severed with Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, the Banū Hāshim and all their supporters

No one can marry a person from the Banū Hāshim

No one will talk to them until Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ is handed over to them.

No one will buy from them or sell to them

The document was written and placed inside the Kaʿbah. Manṣūr ibn ʿIkrimah who had written the document was punished right

away by Allāh سُبۡحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ. He was unable to write anything after that.

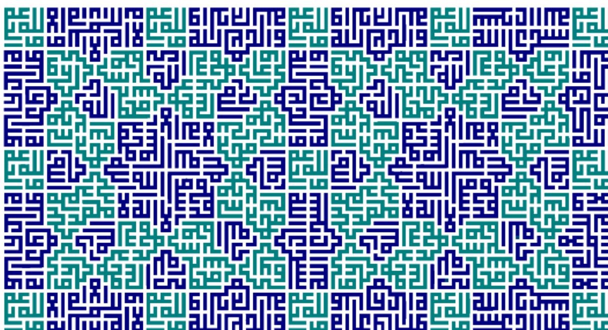
The Boycott Starts

The leaders of the Quraysh all agreed to the terms except the Banū Muṭṭalib. The Banū Muṭṭalib were the children of Hāshims brother Muṭṭalib. Due to this disagreement, they also became subject to the boycott.

Abū Ṭālib, along with the others, had no choice but to now move out of the centre of Makkah to a valley on the outskirts. This valley became known as the valley of Abū Ṭālib.

The Banū Hāshim and Banū Muṭṭalib, both Muslims and non-Muslims, supported him and moved out to the valley. The Muslims moved because of their religion and the non-Muslims due to their ties of kinship.

From the Banu Hāshim, only Abū Lahab stayed with the Quraysh in Makkah.



The Difficulties of the Boycott

The boycott did not just carry on for a day, or a week or a month, but for 3 years. The families of the Banū Hāshim and Banū Muṭṭalib stayed like this with ever mounting difficulties.

The people were starving to the extent that you could hear the crying of hungry children. Some of the people used to survive eating the leaves off Acacia trees.



The boycott had been implemented to such an extent that when a trade caravan used to come into Makkah, Abū Lahab would make an announcement saying that no one is to sell to Muḥammad ﷺ for the normal price, they would have to charge him extra. If anyone is at a loss, then he is responsible.



The Companions would come to buy provisions but would return empty handed because of these conditions causing inflated prices.

The Secret Provisions

There were some people who saw the state of the Banū Hāshim and Banū Muṭṭalib and took pity on them. They would secretly send them food and provisions.

On one occasion, along with his servant, Ḥakīm ibn Ḥizām رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ the nephew of Khadījah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهَا was going to see her with some grain. On the way they met Abū Jahal and he asked them, if they were taking the grain for the Banū Hāshim. He told them that he would not let them it on any account and would disgrace them in front of everyone.



It just so happened that Abū Al-Bakhtarī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was going by. After he found out what was happening, he said to Abū Jahal that a person is sending some grain to his aunt, why are you stopping them? When Abū Jahal heard this, he got very angry and started to say very bad words. Abū Al-Bakhtarī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ lifted a camel bone and struck Abū Jahal on the head to the extent that he started to bleed.

More than the actual physical pain, Abū Jahal felt more pain since Ḥamzah رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ was watching what was happening from his place in the valley.

The Effort to Break the Boycott

The boycott had continued for around 3 years and now a group of people from the Quraysh decided to try and break it. One of these was Hishām ibn ʿAmr. He used to see that they, meaning the people in Makkah were all fed and watered whilst their brethren from the Banū Hāshim and Banū Muṭṭalib were starving in the valley.

To ease some of their plight, he used to take a camel full of provisions at night time to the valley and leave it there.

One day Hishām ibn ʿAmr went to Zahīr ibn Abū Amiya who was the grandson of ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib. He was the son of ʿĀtikā, the aunt of Rasūlullāh ﷺ, therefore he was his cousin.

Hishām said to Zahīr, 'Oh Zahīr, do you like it that you can eat what you want, wear what you want, marry who you want, and your uncle is hungry for even a single grain. I swear by Allāh, if Abū Jahals' uncle and mother's family were in a state like this, then Abū Jahal would never even think of any agreement'.

Zahīr said regretfully that he was alone, what could he possibly do alone. If only there was another person who felt the same way, then he would stand up for this cause.

Hishām ibn ʿAmr got up from there and went to Muṭʿam ibn ʿAdīy and made him think the same way. Muṭʿam also said that another person should be made to share their feelings.

Hishām then went to Abū Al-Bakhtarī and after a while to Zumʿā ibn Al-Aswad and made them also share the same feelings. In total 5 people got ready and decided when the people gather tomorrow we will raise this issue.

The Announcement

The following morning, the people started to gather in the Ḥaram. Zahīr ibn Abū Amiya stood up and said, 'Oh people of Makkah, it is a very unfortunate thing that you can eat, drink, wear clothes, and marry and the Banū Hāshim are dying of starvation'. He said that he would not sit down until the document upon which the terms had been written, is ripped up. Abū Jahal replied that this document can never be ripped up.

Zumʿā then said, 'it can definitely be ripped up, when this document was written we were not happy with it'. Abū Al-Bakhtarī then said 'Zumʿā is staying the truth, we were also not happy'.

Muṭʿam then said, both are saying the truth. Hishām ibn ʿAmr also now supported them. Abū Jahal saw what was happening and was shocked and said indeed this is a thing which has been fixed in the night.

The Parchment

At that time, Rasūlullāh ﷺ told his uncle Abū Ṭālib that the document which had been drawn up had been eaten away by ants.

Apart from the words باسمك اللهم, which was written at the beginning, all the other letters had been eaten away.

Abū Ṭālib went to the Quraysh and told them about the parchment. He said my nephew has informed me of this today and he has never lied, and up until today, none of his words have proven untrue. Let us decide that if what Muḥammad ﷺ is saying is true, then you will stop this boycott. If what he says is false, then I am ready to surrender him to yourselves, you can either kill him or leave him alive.



The people said, Oh Abū Ṭālib, you have said a just thing, and at that moment the document was called for. When they saw it, to their amazement, all the letters apart from Allāh's name had been eaten away by the ants. They lowered their heads in shame and embarrassment. The boycott was now finally over.

Abū Bakr رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ Intends to Migrate to Abyssinia

During this time Abū Bakr رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ decided to migrate to Abyssinia. He set out and reached a place called Bark Al-Ghimād where he met Ibn Ad-Daghinah who was the chief of the Qārah tribe.

Ibn Ad-Daghinah asked Abū Bakr رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ where he was going, and he replied that his people have turned him out, so he wanted to wander the earth and worship his Lord.



Ibn Ad-Daghinah told Abū Bakr رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ that a man like you should not leave and nor should you be driven out. For indeed you help the destitute earn their living, you keep good relations with your kith and kin, you help the weak and the poor, you entertain your guests generously and help the calamity-stricken ones. Therefore I am your protector, go back to your land and worship your Lord.

Abū Bakr رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ then returned to Makkah and Ibn Ad-Daghinah went with him. In the evening Ibn Ad-Daghinah went to visit the leaders of the Quraysh.

He told them that a man like Abū Bakr رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ should not leave his land nor should he be driven out. He asked them, do you drive out such a man who has so many good qualities.? Ibn Ad-Daghinah then mentioned all the good characteristics of Abū Bakr رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

The Quraysh had no answer and couldn't refuse Ibn Ad-Daghinahs protection. They told him to tell Abū Bakr رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنْهُ to worship his Lord in his house. He can pray there and recite what he wishes, but he must not harm them with it. He should also not pray publicly as we fear it may affect our women and children.

Ibn Ad-Daghinah told Abū Bakr رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنْهُ the conditions of the Quraysh and he returned to his house. He worshipped Allāh سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَىٰ inside his house and he didn't recite the Qur'ān outside of it.

The thought then occurred to Abū Bakr رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنْهُ that he should build a Masjid in front of his house, where he could pray and recite the Qur'ān.

The women and children of the Polytheists now started to gather around him. They used to look at him and wonder about it. Abū Bakr رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنْهُ was a man who cried a lot. He couldn't control his eyes, when he used to recite the Qur'ān. This situation scared the leaders of the Quraysh, so they sent for Ibn Ad-Daghinah.



When Ibn Ad-Daghinah arrived, they told him that they accepted his protection for Abū Bakr رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنْهُ on the condition that he worships inside his house and he has transgressed that. He has made a Masjid in front of his house and he prays and recites the

Qur'ān inside it. And we fear he may affect our women and children, so stop him from doing this.

Tell him, if he loved to worship his Lord in the confines of his house, then he may do so. If he does not like it, then ask him to release you from your obligation to protect him, for we dislike breaking our pact with you. And we do not give permission to Abū Bakr رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ to worship openly.

Ibn Ad-Daghinah went to see Abū Bakr رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ and reminded him of the contract he had made on his behalf. He told him to abide by the conditions (which were to pray in his house), or else release him from his obligation of protecting him. He didn't want the Arabs to say that his people have dishonoured a contract which he had made on behalf of another man.

Abū Bakr رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ told Ibn Ad-Daghinah, that he has released him from his pact to protect him and that he was pleased with the protection from Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ. So Abū Bakr رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ didn't migrate to Abyssinia but very soon he would be part of the most famous migration in the History of Mankind, the migration to Madīnah.

The Year of Sorrow

It was now the 10th year of Prophethood. The Muslims had left the valley of Abū Ṭālib and returned to Makkah. This year became known as the 'Year of Sorrow' due to the events which would occur in it.

Just a few days after returning to Makkah, either in the month of Ramaḍān or Shawwāl, Abū Ṭālib passed away.

And either 3 or 5 days after that, the wife and companion of the Rasūlullāh ﷺ, the first person to accept Islām, Sayyidah Khaḍījah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا also left this world.



The Death of Abū Ṭālib

In Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhāri, in Kitābul Janā'iz, there is a Ḥadīth which mentions what happened when Abu Taalib passed away.

عَنِ ابْنِ شِهَابٍ قَالَ أَخْبَرَنِي سَعِيدُ بْنُ الْمُسَيَّبِ عَنْ أَبِيهِ أَنَّهُ أَخْبَرَهُ أَنَّهُ لَمَّا حَضَرَتْ أَبَا طَالِبٍ الْوَفَاةُ جَاءَهُ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَوَجَدَ عِنْدَهُ أَبَا جَهْلِ بْنَ هِشَامٍ وَعَبْدَ اللَّهِ بْنَ أَبِي أُمَيَّةَ بْنِ الْمُغِيرَةِ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم لأَبِي طَالِبٍ

" يَا عَمِّ قُلْ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ كَلِمَةً أَشْهَدُ لَكَ بِهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ".

فَقَالَ أَبُو جَهْلٍ وَعَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ أَبِي أُمَيَّةَ يَا أَبَا طَالِبٍ أَتَرْغَبُ عَنْ مِلَّةِ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ فَلَمْ يَزَلْ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم يَعْرِضُهَا عَلَيْهِ وَيَعُودَانِ بِتِلْكَ الْمَقَالَةِ حَتَّى قَالَ أَبُو طَالِبٍ آخِرَ مَا كَلَّمَهُمْ هُوَ عَلَى مِلَّةِ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ وَأَبَى أَنْ يَقُولَ لاَ إِلَهَ إِلاَّ اللَّهُ.

فَقَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صلى الله عليه وسلم

" أَمَا وَاللَّهِ لأَسْتَغْفِرَنَّ لَكَ مَا لَمْ أُنْهَ عَنْكَ ".

فَأَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى فِيهِ الآيَةَ

{مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ}[4]

[4] Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhāri 1360

When Abū Ṭālib approached death, Rasūlullāh ﷺ came to Abū Ṭālib and found that Abū Jahal ibn Hishām and ʿAbdullāh ibn Abū Ummayah ibn Al-Mughayrah were with him. Rasūlullāh ﷺ said to Abū Ṭālib, "Oh uncle, say Lā ilāha illallāh, a word I will bear witness for you with it, with Allāh'.

Abū Jahal and ʿAbdullāh ibn Abū Ummayah said to Abū Ṭālib, 'Will you turn away from the religion of ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib?' Rasūlullāh ﷺ continued to ask Abū Ṭālib, and Abu Jahal and ʿAbdullāh ibn Abū Ummayah kept on repeating what they were saying. Until the last words that Abū Ṭālib said were that he was on the religion of ʿAbdul Muṭṭalib and refused to say the kalimah.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ said I will continue to ask forgiveness for you unless I am forbidden by Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ to do so.

Do not ask forgiveness for him

Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ then revealed verse 113 of Sūrah At-Taubah

مَا كَانَ لِلنَّبِيِّ وَٱلَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوٓاْ أَن يَسْتَغْفِرُواْ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ وَلَوْ كَانُوٓاْ
أُوْلِي قُرْبَىٰ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مَا تَبَيَّنَ لَهُمْ أَنَّهُمْ أَصْحَٰبُ ٱلْجَحِيمِ ﴿١١٣﴾

"It is not for the Prophet ﷺ and those who believe that they seek forgiveness for the Polytheists, even if they were relatives, after it has become clear to them that they are the companions of the fire"

The Burial of Abū Ṭālib

There is a Ḥadīth in Sunan Nasa'ī which tells us about Abū Ṭālibs burial

أَخْبَرَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ الْمُثَنَّى عَنْ مُحَمَّدٍ قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي شُعْبَةُ عَنْ أَبِي إِسْحَاقَ قَالَ سَمِعْتُ نَاجِيَةَ بْنَ كَعْبٍ عَنْ عَلِيٍّ رضى الله عنه أَنَّهُ أَتَى النَّبِيَّ صلى الله عليه وسلم فَقَالَ إِنَّ أَبَا طَالِبٍ مَاتَ . فَقَالَ " اذْهَبْ فَوَارِهِ " . قَالَ إِنَّهُ مَاتَ مُشْرِكًا . قَالَ " اذْهَبْ فَوَارِهِ " . فَلَمَّا وَارَيْتُهُ رَجَعْتُ إِلَيْهِ فَقَالَ لِي " اغْتَسِلْ "[5]

ʿAlī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ came to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and said, 'Indeed Abū Ṭālib has died'. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ told him to go and bury him. We must remember that Abū Ṭālib was ʿAlī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ father. ʿAlī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ said, 'He died as a polytheist'. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ again told him to go and bury him.

After ʿAlī رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ had buried him, he returned to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ who then told him to bathe.

[5] Sunan Nasa'ī 191

The Journey to Ṭā'if

The loss of Abū Ṭālib meant that Rasūlullāh ﷺ had no helper or protector, and the death of Khaḍījah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهَا meant that he had no one to console him.

Rasūlullāh ﷺ made plans at the end of the month of Shawwāl in the 10th year of Prophethood to go to Ṭā'if. The City of Ṭā'if lies to the east of Makkah and is approximately 40 miles away although the journey would have been longer.



Rasūlullāh ﷺ thought, maybe the people in Ṭā'if, the Banū Thaqīf, may accept his call towards Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ and become his helpers and protectors. So he left for Ṭā'if with Zayd ibn Al-Ḥārithah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ.

The Invitation to the Leaders

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ arrived in Ṭā'if and presented Islām, to three brothers who were from among their leaders, ʿAbd Yalayl, Mas'ūd and Ḥabīb ibn ʿAmr ibn ʿUmayr.

Rather than even listen to his call, they turned him away with severe words. One of them said, couldn't Allāh سُبْحَانَهُۥ وَتَعَالَىٰ find anyone else apart from you, to send as a Messenger? Another took an oath that he wouldn't even talk to him. They then told the street urchins to pelt Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ with stones and mock him.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ was pelted and he became wounded. When Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ would sit down due to the pain caused by the stones, they would lift him up again, so they can throw even more stones at him and laugh.



Zayd ibn Al-Ḥārithah رَضِيَ ٱللَّٰهُ عَنْهُ who was with Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ tried to stop the stones from reaching him. He would shield his body with his own and his whole face became bloody due to the injuries. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ feet were so injured, that they were also bleeding.

ʿAddās

On the way back from Ṭā'if, Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ and Zayd رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنْهُ took refuge under a tree in a garden which belonged to ʿUtbah and Shaybah ibn Rabīʿah and supplicated to Allāh سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَىٰ.

ʿUtbah and Shaybah had been watching the helplessness of Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ and told their servant ʿAddās to take some grapes to Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ and tell him to eat some of them.



ʿAddās put the grapes in front of the Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ who recited Bismillāh and started to eat them. ʿAddās said 'I swear by my Lord that there is no one in this town who says these words'. Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ asked him where he was from and what religion did he follow.

ʿAddās said that he was from Nineveh and was a Christian. Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ asked him if it was the same Nineveh in which Allāh سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَىٰ pious servant Yūnus ibn Mattā عَلَيْهِٱلسَّلَامُ used to live. ʿAddās asked Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ what do you know about him?

Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ said, my brother was a Prophet and I am a Prophet also. ʿAddās then kissed the forehead, hands and feet of Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ and bore witness that he was the Prophet and Servant of Allāh سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَىٰ.

When ʿAddās returned, ʿUtbah and Shaybah asked him why he was kissing the hands and feet of Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ. ʿAddās said ‘Oh my masters, there is nothing in this world better than him, he has told me of things which only a Prophet would know’.

The brothers then told him that this man may turn you away from your religion and your religion is superior to his.

The Angels Offer

In Ṣaḥīh Muslim, there is a Ḥadīth in which ʿĀ’ishah رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنۡهَا once asked Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ has there ever been a day more severe on you then the day of Uḥud? Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ said, that the most severe day was when he presented himself to ibn ʿAbd Yalayl ibn ʿAbd Kulāl and he didn’t accept my invitation as I had intended.

I returned from there very upset and reached Qarn Thaʿālib. I looked up and saw that a cloud was shadowing me and Jibrīl عَلَيۡهِٱلسَّلَامُ was present there. Jibrīl عَلَيۡهِٱلسَّلَامُ called me from there and said that Allāh سُبۡحَانَهُۥوَتَعَالَىٰ has heard what the people have said to you and how they have reacted to you. Allāh سُبۡحَانَهُۥوَتَعَالَىٰ has sent the Angel of the Mountains so you can give him any command you want to.



The Angel of the Mountains then called out to Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ and presented his greetings to him. He said 'Oh Muḥammad صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ, Allāh has heard what your people have said to you, and I am the Angel of the Mountains. Your Lord has sent me to you so that you may order me what you wish'.

'If you wish, then I can make these two mountains meet. and all the people in between will be crushed'. (The people of Makkah and Ṭā'if resided between these 2 mountains)

Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ said 'No, I have hope with Allāh سُبْحَانَهُوَتَعَالَىٰ that he will bring such people in their progeny who will only worship him and not join any partners with him'.



The Jinns listen to the call

On the way back from Ṭā’if, Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ stayed for a few days in Maqām Nakhlah.

One night he was reading Ṣalāt when a group of 7 Jinns passed by him. They stood and listened to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ reciting the Qur’ān and then went away. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ had no knowledge that they had been there until Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ sent the Revelation.

وَإِذْ صَرَفْنَآ إِلَيْكَ نَفَرًا مِّنَ ٱلْجِنِّ يَسْتَمِعُونَ ٱلْقُرْءَانَ فَلَمَّا حَضَرُوهُ
قَالُوٓا۟ أَنصِتُوا۟ ۖ فَلَمَّا قُضِىَ وَلَّوْا۟ إِلَىٰ قَوْمِهِم مُّنذِرِينَ (٢٩) قَالُوا۟ يَٰقَوْمَنَآ
إِنَّا سَمِعْنَا كِتَٰبًا أُنزِلَ مِنۢ بَعْدِ مُوسَىٰ مُصَدِّقًا لِّمَا بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ يَهْدِىٓ
إِلَى ٱلْحَقِّ وَإِلَىٰ طَرِيقٍ مُّسْتَقِيمٍ (٣٠) يَٰقَوْمَنَآ أَجِيبُوا۟ دَاعِىَ ٱللَّهِ
وَءَامِنُوا۟ بِهِۦ يَغْفِرْ لَكُم مِّن ذُنُوبِكُمْ وَيُجِرْكُم مِّنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ
(٣١) وَمَن لَّا يُجِبْ دَاعِىَ ٱللَّهِ فَلَيْسَ بِمُعْجِزٍ فِى ٱلْأَرْضِ وَلَيْسَ لَهُۥ
مِن دُونِهِۦٓ أَوْلِيَآءُ ۚ أُو۟لَٰٓئِكَ فِى ضَلَٰلٍ مُّبِينٍ (٣٢)

“And (recall) when We directed a group of Jinns towards you, listening to the Qur’ān. So, when they attended it, they said (to each other), “Keep quiet.” Then once it was over, they went back

to their people as warners. (29) They said, “O our people, we have heard a book sent down after Mūsā, confirming what was before it, which guides to the truth and to a straight path. (30) O our people, respond to Allāh’s herald, and believe in him, and (once you do that,) Allāh will forgive your sins for you, and will save you from a painful punishment. (31) The one who does not respond to Allāh’s herald is not (able) to frustrate (Allāh by escaping) in the land, and for him there are no supporters besides Him. Such people are in open error. (32)”

The Return to Makkah

When they got close to Makkah, Zayd ibn Al-Ḥārithah رَضِيَ ٱللَّهُ عَنْهُ asked Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, how would they enter Makkah. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ said that Allāh سُبْحَانَهُ وَتَعَالَىٰ would find a way out for them from this predicament.

They reached the Cave of Ḥirā' and sent a message to Akhnas ibn Sharīq asking if Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ could enter Makkah under his protection. Akhnas replied that he was an ally of the Quraysh, so he could not help him.



Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ then asked Suḥayl ibn ʿAmr, he also refused. He then asked Muṭ'am ibn ʿAdīy if he could enter Makkah under his protection. Muṭ'am agreed and called his sons and other people from his clan to come with their weapons and wait at the doors of the Ḥaram.

Muṭ'am proclaimed in front of the Quraysh that he has given protection to Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ and no one should object to him.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ entered the Ḥaram and kissed Ḥajare Aswad. He then performed the Ṭawāf, read 2 Rakʿah then returned to his

home. Muṭ'am and his sons had created a circle around the Rasūlullāh ﷺ.

Many years later, on the day of the Battle of Badr, Rasūlullāh ﷺ remembered Muṭ'āms favour. The Muslims had many captives and Rasūlullāh ﷺ said 'If Muṭ'am ibn 'Adīy was alive today and if he was to ask me about these people, then I would release them all due to his favour'.



Summary

Allāh سُبۡحَانَهُۥوَتَعَالَىٰ has strengthened Islām with Ḥamzah رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنۡهُ. Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ now supplicated to Allāh سُبۡحَانَهُۥوَتَعَالَىٰ to further strengthen his religion with either Abū Jahal or ʿUmar رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنۡهُ.

ʿUmar رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنۡهُ had gone with sword in hand to put an end to Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ, but his attention was diverted to his sister Fāṭimah رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنۡهَا house. He arrived at the sound of the recitation of the Holy Qur'ān and was greatly angered when he realised both his sister and brother in law had started to follow the way of Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ.

He calmed down and read the words of the Revelation and asked to be taken to Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ. The supplication of Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ was answered and Allāh سُبۡحَانَهُۥوَتَعَالَىٰ chose ʿUmar رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنۡهُ.

The Quraysh now decided to boycott the Muslims and their supporters until Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيۡهِوَسَلَّمَ is handed over to them. No one could talk to them, marry them or trade with them.

Abū Ṭālib, along with the rest of the Banū Hāshim and Banū Muṭṭalib left Makkah and moved to a valley. It was a time of intense hardship for the Muslims and their supporters who stayed there.

The boycott was finally broken when a group of people from the Quraysh took steps to try and break it.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ, had been given news that the parchment on which the terms of the boycott had been written, had been eaten away.

Abū Ṭālib informed the Quraysh and gave them an ultimatum. If Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ words were lies, he would hand him over, if not then the boycott would be cancelled.

Upon checking the parchment, they found that Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ had spoken to truth and the boycott was finally broken.

The 10th year of Prophethood was known as the 'Year of Sorrow' due to the death of Abū Ṭālib & Khaḍījah رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنْهَا. On one hand, his wife was the first Muslim and on the other hand, the uncle who had protected him since he was 8 years old, died without embracing.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّىٱللَّهُعَلَيْهِوَسَلَّمَ then journeyed to Ṭā'if to invite the Banū Thaqīf towards Islām. He was not received in a polite manner and the street urchins were sent after him and Zayd رَضِيَٱللَّهُعَنْهُ who had accompanied him.

They were pelted with stones relentlessly as they left the town and took refuge in a garden where they met ʿAddās, who originated from Nineveh, the town of Yūnus عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ.

Allāh then sent Jibrīl عَلَيْهِ ٱلسَّلَامُ and the Angel of the Mountains, who would do what Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ commanded. Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ, the Mercy of the Worlds, spared the people and said he hoped that there will be people in their progeny who will only worship Allāh and not join partners with him.

Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ then travelled back to Makkah and entered under the protection of Muṭʾam ibn Adīy. The first ten years of Prophethood had been very testing, but the number of Muslims grew, and their faith was becoming ever stronger. The Quraysh were running out of ideas and soon Rasūlullāh صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ would tell them of the most Miraculous Journey ever undertaken by any man. A journey which would take him to the Furthest Masjid and then onto the Heavens themselves.



Sīrah of Muḥammad صَلَّى ٱللَّٰهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ
Part 6 - The Middle Years of the Makkan Period

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